

Overview of Concepts Developed For the MNE 5 Enabling Focus Area "Coalition Information Strategy / Information Operations" (IS)

This is the final MNE 5 document on "The Information Factor within a Comprehensive Approach to Multinational Crisis Management".

Contact peterwestenkirchner@bundeswehr.org for inquiries regarding subsequent updates beyond MNE 5 efforts.

1. Framework Concept: "The Information Factor within a Comprehensive Approach to Multinational Crisis Management"

(Coordinated Draft, Version 3.0, 19 December 2008; Target: Final Draft, 03 April 2009)

PURPOSE: This Framework Concept promotes an understanding amongst civil and military partners cooperating in crisis management of the information factor; the requirement for coordinated information activities within a comprehensive and effects-based approach; and the necessity of strategic interagency political guidance for information activities. It addresses issues that are relevant for decision-makers and their analysts, planners, and implementers in crisis management. The challenge is to agree common processes to enable partners to maximise the benefits of undertaking information activities. It is asserted that partners must address the information factor; otherwise crisis management will be less effective and more protracted. At worse, contrary actors will exploit the information factor toward their own ends. The Framework Concept concludes that a new approach to considering the information factor in crisis management is required.

KEY RESULTS: The proposed solution has three key pillars:

- *Systemic Understanding.* Actors involved in crisis management activities should develop a comprehensive and systemic understanding of the operational environment with specific emphasis on the information factor.
- *Information Strategy.* Comprehensive, strategic-political and mission-specific guidance should provide the basis for multinational information activities in support of crisis management. An Information Strategy should state the whole-of-government, interagency and multinational approach to the information environment, providing mission-specific, strategic, political guidance for civil and military information activities in support of crisis management objectives.
- *Coordinated Information Activities.* All capabilities able to affect the information environment should be integrated through institutionalised co-ordination procedures.

IMPACT: Information permeates societies, such that actors and audiences have become increasingly indistinguishable: 'to observe is to be a part'. Every action sends a message, intended or not: 'one cannot *not* communicate'. Events are reviewed not by what actually occurs but on the context and by the way in which they are presented, mediated, received and interpreted: perception becomes reality and credibility counts more than content. Information is at the heart of modern societies, which are increasingly reliant on technical and social information systems to function effectively. Most security challenges today are addressed by multinational coalitions.

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The achievement of shared objectives requires the concerted and carefully considered employment of all levers of power. The comprehensive approach seeks the wide-ranging mutual engagement of government and non-government actors at all levels, using all appropriate resources and levers of power to influence a regional environment and create stability. The effects-based approach takes shared objectives, identifies the pre-requisites for meeting them, the nature of system changes (effects) to achieve those pre-requisites, and the activities necessary to achieve desired effects. Common concepts and planning/activity processes make for more effective partnership. A similar approach in the information environment is suggested.

WAY AHEAD: The basic approach to the information environment in multinational coalitions will be continued, further refined and described for practical application in the MNE 6 Framework Concept "Strategic Communication in Support of Multinational Coalition Operations within a Comprehensive Approach".

2. Analytical Concept: "Development of a Multinational Information Strategy" (Final Draft, Version 1.0, 31 October 2008)

PURPOSE: This Analytical Concept translates basic ideas of the Framework Concept "The Information Factor within a Comprehensive Approach to Multinational Crisis Management" into actionable information with a focus on the policy/decision-making level. It outlines processes and organisational structures required for the development and initial thoughts on the implementation of mission-specific strategic and political guidance for civil and military information activities. The concept describes methods to enable and promote relationships with all appropriate actors (civil, military, governmental, and non-governmental) in the information environment, and requirements for the harmonisation of information activities amongst multinational partners (considering national caveats, cultural/political originalities, and legal restrictions). The Analytical Concept also benefits further development of multinational interoperability and concept development concerning information activities in an interagency context.

KEY RESULTS: The proposed conceptual solution is an 'Information Strategy' providing strategic and political guidance for interagency information activities. This approach is based on the understanding of the information factor as described in the Framework Concept, and is tailored to the provisions and interfaces provided by the MNE 5 principal focus areas: 'Multinational Interagency Strategic Planning', 'Cooperative Implementation Planning', and 'Cooperative Implementation Management and Evaluation'.

Chapter 1 of this Analytical Concept describes the *CD&E background* and the context of MNE 5, including the scope of the Information Strategy construct and its relations to relevant other MNE 5 concepts.

Chapter 2 explains the *operational context* in terms of fundamentals and real-world deficiencies identified by thorough baseline assessment, which should be addressed by new conceptual solutions: the Information Strategy is introduced and its conceptual relations to other emerging and extant concepts are described.

Chapter 3 outlines the *principles and content* of an Information Strategy and related relationships to products from the overarching strategic and implementation planning processes. Furthermore, the relevance of the Information Strategy to an effective Information Campaign, comprising national, strategic-political initiatives as well as in-theatre, implementation-level activities, is explained.

Chapter 4 describes the *development process* of an Information Strategy as well as specific organisational elements involved in this process. The development process and its structural application are tailored to the strategic and implementation planning processes and respective interfaces provided by the principal MNE 5 focus areas.

In order to facilitate the application of its conceptual provisions, this concept document also contains some annexes with suggested guidance. Annex A and the attached Appendix A-1 supply a taxonomy and a set of guiding questions in support of a comprehensive and systemic *analysis and assessment of the information environment*. Annex B contains proposals for the *development of Information Objectives* as conditions to be created in the information environment in support of the achievement of political and strategic aims. Annex C details the *development of themes and messages* to be included in an Information Strategy. Annex D suggests a *format* for an Information Strategy document. Annex E contains *generic job descriptions* for key personnel involved in the development of the Information Strategy.

IMPACT: The information factor is introduced as an integral part of these, inherent in all analysis, planning, management/execution, and evaluation/assessment efforts of multinational interagency operations. The processes and organisational structures outlined in the Analytical Concept do not demand a separate planning process for information activities, independent from the overall interagency processes. Rather it describes specific functions within these processes from the information environment perspective and related co-ordination mechanisms. The concept integrates input provided by participating nations and constitutes a draft doctrine for information-related contributions to the Comprehensive Approach for multinational experimentation purposes. It does not represent an agreed/approved combination of national doctrine, nor is it proposed for immediate national implementation.

WAY AHEAD: The approach to strategic and political guidance for interagency information activities will be continued, further refined and described for practical application in the MNE 6 Framework Concept "Strategic Communication in Support of Multinational Coalition Operations within a Comprehensive Approach".

3. Applied Concept: "The Military Information Operations Function within a Comprehensive and Effects-Based Approach"

(Second Draft, Version 3.0, 19 December 2008; Target: Final Draft, 29 May 2009)

PURPOSE: This Applied Concept describes methods for the implementation of a multinational Information Strategy in the military, focused on the provision of advice and co-ordination regarding military activities affecting the information environment below the strategic level, including appropriate interagency interfaces. It builds on the common understanding of the Information Operations (Info Ops) function developed by the Multinational Information Operations Experiment (MNIOE) during a lengthy course of discussions (since 2003). Meanwhile, this understanding has affected

current national and multinational concept development, e.g., that of the European Union and NATO; many of the MNIOE group of experts were involved in the preparation of NATO's Allied Joint Doctrine for Info Ops (AJP-3.10). In order to further promote the MNIOE conceptual approach to Info Ops in an applied operational context, the Applied Concept refers to AJP-3.10 in its current version¹, amending/adjusting the original as required.

KEY RESULTS: The Applied Concept provides a conceptual distinction between *Information Operations (Info Ops)* and *information activities*. The proposed definitions are as follows:

- a. Info Ops is a military function to provide advice and co-ordination regarding activities affecting information and information systems – including system behaviour and capabilities – in order to create desired effects.
- b. Information activities are actions designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protective measures.

Major critical issues for amending/adjusting AJP-3.10, reflected in this document, are:

- the desired emphasis on effects-based thinking and an effects-based approach to operations;
- the proposed scope of advice and co-ordination concerning effects in the information environment – not limited to information activities (i.e., those actions deliberately designed to affect information and information systems);
- the envisioned role of Public Affairs related to Info Ops – not separated but fully integrated in the co-ordination process for effects in the information environment and information activities;
- the requirement for mission-specific strategic and political guidance for information activities in the suggested format of a multinational Information Strategy; and
- the aspired applicability of proposed processes and structures regardless of organisational form – national contingents, Coalition or Alliance.

Today's military operations to counter the complex challenges of the global security environment require consideration and integration of the information factor throughout all processes – analysis, planning, execution and assessment. This integration demands that all decision-makers at all times appropriately understand the (possible) effects of their actions in the information environment: it is not just about deliberate activity using information through means of communication; it is the combination of words and deeds that delivers the ultimate effect. A respective systemic understanding of the information environment should result in a consistent and coherent orchestration of all available means, comparable to the army's concept of 'combined arms combat' or the philosophy of 'jointness' in operational art. This is a new mind-set, which requires comprehensive *education and training* rather than restructuring military organisations. Info Ops staffs will assist the development of this new mind-set by providing advice and co-ordination related to relevant aspects of the information environment throughout analysis, planning, execution and assessment of military operations.

¹ AJP-3.10 Ratification Draft (as issued at 20 October 2008).

IMPACT: As described above, the new conceptual approach to Info Ops has already influenced the way of considering the information factor in a multinational military context. Both NATO and EU policy and doctrine today reflect this approach to a large extent. In addition, the Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC) – while referring to NATO concepts, as appropriate – has acknowledged this understanding of the Info Ops function and endorsed its further experimental development using MNIOE as the responsible CD&E platform.

WAY AHEAD: Future application of the concept requires the development of methods and tools in support of education and training for developing the 'Info Ops mind-set'. The envisioned MNE 6 Analytical Concept "Enhanced Systemic Understanding of the Information Environment in Complex Crisis Management" will address some related key issues. Furthermore, the role of Info Ops within the emerging concept of Strategic Communication needs to be identified. This will be one aspect for consideration in the MNE 6 Framework Concept "Strategic Communication in Support of Multinational Coalition Operations within a Comprehensive Approach".

Prepared by: LTC Peter E. Westenkirchner, OPR MNIOE
peterwestenkirchner@bundeswehr.org

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